

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as indicated below. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A content usage control apparatus for controlling use of content under a predetermined condition, comprising:

acquisition means for acquiring first identification information for a first client, the first client being an apparatus or user requesting use of the content;

registration means for registering the first identification information acquired from the first client, and for changing the registered first identification information;

change limitation means for preventing the registration means from further changing the first identification information in accordance with a limitation on changing identification information;

limitation modifying means for modifying the limitation on changing identification information; and

usage control means for, in response to the request for use of the content issued by the first client, determining whether the use of the content is allowed on the basis of whether the first identification information is currently registered.

2. (Previously Presented) A content usage control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the registration means performs registration in response to a request issued by the first client.

3. (Previously Presented) A content usage control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the registration means performs new registration only when a current

number of registrations is smaller than a predetermined maximum allowable number of registrations.

4. (Previously Presented) A content usage control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the registration means stores, together with the first identification information, an invalidation flag for controlling provision of a service to the first client; and

the usage control means limits the use of the content by the first client if the invalidation flag associated with the first client is set.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously Presented) A content usage control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the limitation is a maximum number of times identification information can be replaced.

7. (Currently Amended) A content usage control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the limitation is a predetermined ~~minimum~~ amount of time that must expire between replacing identification information.

8. (Previously Presented) A content usage control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein when the registered first identification information for the first client is replaced with second identification information for a second client, the change limitation means requests the second client to perform a particular operation.

9. (Previously Presented) A content usage control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein when the registered first identification information is replaced with second identification information for a second client, the change limitation means requests submission of change permission information from the second client.

10. (Previously Presented) A content usage control apparatus according to claim

6, wherein the change limitation means charges fees for changing the maximum number of times identification information can be replaced.

11. (Previously Presented) A content usage control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein when the limitation is modified the change limitation means requests submission of change permission information from a different apparatus or a manager.

12. (Currently Amended) A content usage control method for controlling use of content under a predetermined condition, comprising steps of:

acquiring first identification information for a first client, the first client being an apparatus or user requesting use of the content;

registering the first identification information acquired from the first client;

changing the registered first identification information;

preventing further changes to the registered first identification information in accordance with a limitation on changing identification information;

modifying the limitation on changing identification information; and

in response to the request for use of the content issued by the first client, determining whether the use of the content is allowed on the basis of whether the first identification information is currently registered.

13. (Previously Presented) A content usage control method according to claim 12, wherein registration is performed in response to a request issued by the first client.

14. (Previously Presented) A content usage control method according to claim 12, wherein new registration is performed only when a current number of registrations is smaller than a predetermined maximum allowable number of registrations.

15. (Previously Presented) A content usage control method according to claim

12, wherein an invalidation flag for controlling provision of a service to the first client is stored together with the first identification information; and

the use of the content by the first client is limited, if the invalidation flag associated with the first client is set.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Previously Presented) A content usage control method according to claim 12, wherein the limitation is a maximum number of times identification information can be replaced.

18. (Currently Amended) A content usage control method according to claim 12, wherein the limitation is a predetermined ~~minimum~~ amount of time that must expire between replacing identification information.

19. (Previously Presented) A content usage control method according to claim 12, wherein when the registered first identification information for the first client is replaced with second identification information for a second client, the second client is requested to perform a particular operation.

20. (Previously Presented) A content usage control method according to claim 12, wherein, when the registered first identification information is replaced with second identification information for a second client, submission of change permission information is requested from the second client or a manager.

21. (Previously Presented) A content usage control method according to claim 17, further comprising charging fees for changing the maximum number of times identification information can be replaced.

22. (Currently Amended) A content usage control method according to claim 12 ~~[[16]]~~, wherein when the limitation is modified, submission of change permission information is requested from a different apparatus or a manager.

23. (Currently Amended) A medium containing processor readable instructions for causing ~~an information~~ a processor to execute a process of controlling use of content under a predetermined condition, the process comprising the steps of:

acquiring first identification information for a first client, the first client being an apparatus or user requesting use of the content;

registering the first identification information acquired from the first client;

changing the registered first identification information;

preventing further changes to the registered first identification information in accordance with a limitation on changing identification information;

modifying the limitation on changing identification information; and

in response to the request for use of the content issued by the first client, determining whether the use of the content is allowed on the basis of whether the first identification information is currently registered.